



# Musical Meaning for the Few: Instances of Private Reception in the Music of Brahms

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The received view of Brahms as a champion of “absolute” music has dominated the scholarly reception of his compositional output for over a century, and with good reason.<sup>1</sup> Except in a few early works, Brahms rarely published his instrumental music with any of the suggestive clues that his contemporaries used in their program music, while his preference for the apparently more classical genres, forms, and procedures seems to distance him from the overtly progressive tendencies of Romanticism that eschewed reliance on classical conventions. What transpired in purely musical terms also was evident in the written word, both that of Brahms and of others. Brahms’s 1860 Manifesto, for instance, seemed to denounce the aesthetic values of that group of composers to whom Karl Franz Brendel referred collectively in 1859 as the “New German School” (i.e., Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner), while Brahms’s eventual endorsement of Edward Hanslick (a critic seemingly notorious for his aversion to program music), and even Schumann’s prophetic “*Neue Bahnen*” of 1853 (heralding Brahms as a musical messiah), served to place him squarely in opposition to the ethos of program music.<sup>2</sup> In the last two decades, however, a number of scholars have drawn on new evidence to argue that Brahms’s output lies somewhere “between absolute and program music.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, many works generally believed to be “absolute” often circulated with textual adjuncts Brahms himself made available in one of three ways: through word of mouth or in personal correspondence, through the inscription of textual clues in manuscript versions of his works, or through the limited distribution of literary works in connection with certain pieces that render the music in question programmatic. But the burden of the received view remains so heavy, the distinction between absolute and program music so firm, that when scholars do uncover a textual adjunct, they either dismiss it as a youthful compositional crutch,<sup>4</sup> or use their findings to rescue Brahms from tradition by embracing him wholeheartedly as a composer of program music.<sup>5</sup> In what follows, I steer a middle ground by arguing that Brahms’s music has a double reception history: within his circle of intimates, Brahms often transmitted suggestive, even programmatic, clues but in the public sphere, he refrained from stipulating any such clues whatsoever, thereby distancing the same music from the more openly specified extramusical associations that characterized program music in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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What emerges in this compromise is a hitherto unacknowledged species of music that exists simultaneously in two contrary ways: as program music for those to whom Brahms stipulated suggestive titles, poetic mottoes, or actual literary texts; as “abstract” or “absolute” music for everyone else.

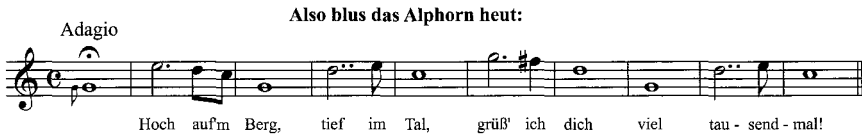
### Public versus Private Meaning

This dual reception history necessarily implies a category of musical meaning that exists only in those select spheres of reception in which Brahms allows such clues to circulate—clues that are held back in the wider arenas of publication and public performance. Such a category presumes an awareness of the distinction between the public and private domains, an awareness which, in the case of Brahms, is evidenced in both his professional and personal life, specifically in his attempts to keep certain aspects of his private life from becoming public. The desire to conceal his authorship, for instance, manifested itself in his use of pseudonyms for youthful compositions. He adopted the name “Karl Würth” for a piano trio (now lost) and a duo for cello and piano (performed in a private Hamburg concert in July 1851), as well as the more widely used “G.W. Marks” for the “*Souvenir de la Russie*” of 1852.<sup>6</sup> This tendency later evolved into a will to destroy not only those manuscripts too revealing of his working methods, but also numerous incomplete or unsatisfactory compositions. Max Kalbeck, Brahms’s friend and first principal biographer, reports that Brahms actually set two trunk loads of such documents aflame in the 1880s, while in the Ischl testament of May 1891, Brahms instructs his publisher, Fritz Simrock, to burn any posthumously discovered manuscripts which the composer may have missed (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 1:132–33 and 4:230).

Such concern with the legacy he left to posterity is also evidenced in the composer’s management of his private affairs. As is well known, Brahms rarely disclosed his inner feelings on paper for fear of exposure or misunderstanding and was, consequently, as careful with his letters as he was with autographs. In May of 1856, for example, he asked Clara Schumann to ensure that their correspondence remain confidential: “I would like you to put on my letters a note indicating that they belong only to you and me alone, just as I have always done with yours and will do with mine” (Litzmann 1927, 1:187).<sup>7</sup> Three decades later, having achieved international fame, he went so far as to urge her to destroy their entire correspondence. In a letter of May 14, 1886, Clara writes,

Should you decide to send me the letters, it would only be for me to look through them once! I could then discard some and keep others. Please

**Example 1:** Johannes Brahms to Clara Schumann, September 12, 1868.



decide. Another thing regarding your letters you must always keep in mind is that they remain in the best and most caring of hands when I die. (Litzmann 1927, 2:300–1).<sup>8</sup>

In a letter from May 1887, Brahms is more to the point:

I would have soon forgotten, however: it is very important that my letters are returned [to me] as should yours be to you! These you can always have—as can your children—I don’t care in any case. But my letters have no return address when I leave this place! Therefore, I ask you dearly to send them to me as soon as possible, and it’s not because I’m in a hurry to bring them to the book binder!” (Litzmann 1927, 2:315–16)<sup>9</sup>

Eleven years earlier, in 1876, he had admitted that he ought to have used more discretion when writing letters (Henschel 1967:29). Where his work as a composer intersected with his private life, Brahms was especially cautious. The deletion of all musical allusions to Schubert’s “Am Meer” and Beethoven’s “An die ferne Geliebte” from the 1889 revision of the Piano Trio, op. 8, for example, may have been motivated not by a desire to improve the opus (as Brahms would have us believe), but instead in order to eradicate the blatant ties to the Schumanns (especially to Clara) that those allusions encoded.<sup>10</sup> Whether in musical compositions or in personal relationships, Brahms’s vigilance in protecting his privacy indicates that he experienced considerable anxiety over which information would become public knowledge.

One case illustrates how Brahms may have used the distinction between public and private to produce divergent responses to a specific moment in the finale of the First Symphony in his audience at large (public) and in one particular listener (private). In reconstructing the compositional history of the opus, scholars often draw attention to a curious letter Brahms sent to Clara on September 12, 1868 (example 1).<sup>11</sup> The brief missive consists only of a musical salutation, “Hoch auf’m Berg, tief im Tal, grüß’ ich dich, viel Tausendmal,” prefaced by the phrase “Also blus das Alphorn heut.” (Thus blows the alphorn today: high on the mountain, deep in the valley, I send you greetings a thousandfold).<sup>12</sup> The tune is, of course, an early version of the horn and flute theme announcing the breakthrough to C Major in

the finale of the symphony (mm. 30–61). In 1868, Clara would certainly not have heard this musical greeting as fodder for a symphony, but instead might have understood it as Brahms's peculiar way of sending birthday wishes from afar and, more importantly, of mending a rift that had opened between them earlier that year.<sup>13</sup> When, eight years later (September 25, 1876), Brahms played for her the symphony's impassioned first movement (which he had already shown her in June of 1862) and the finished finale (Litzmann 1920, 3:339), her thoughts would not have turned to questions of musical genesis and development, as do ours, but instead to the circumstances in which she first encountered the tune. The melody becomes, in her reception of the moment, an instance of an "in-joke." Unfortunately, we have no documentary evidence indicating that she perceived the connection and "got the punch line," but in principal her experience should differ from those who did not know the 1868 letter. It is possible that Brahms originally intended a connection, given his propensity for musical reminiscence and allusion, and that, in playing the two movements for Clara, he was trying to coax her into recognizing it as well. Even if she did not see it, we can still entertain the thought that Brahms was inviting Clara to situate the horn theme—perhaps even the whole symphony—within the context of their turbulent relationship. Indeed, David Brodbeck has suggested that the "progress of the music mirrors the progress of Brahms's own resolution of the turmoil surrounding his involvement with Clara" (1989:412). Needless to say, the general public would not have been aware of this letter nor of its biographical implications at the November 4th premiere even though the horn *topos* was, and continues to be, widely noticed. The moment, therefore, instances precisely the difference between a public reception of the theme, and a private mode of reception—the meaning of which would (in this case) be retrievable only by Clara.

### Riddles as Indicators of Private Meaning

There is ample evidence that the young Brahms frequently supplied close friends with explicit clues about potentially programmatic sources for his music by word of mouth or a remark in a letter. According to Albert Dietrich (a long-time friend of Brahms and pupil of Schumann), Brahms reported that he had Robert Burns's poem "My Heart's in the Highland" in mind as a program for the A Minor melody from the finale of the Piano Sonata, op. 1 (Dietrich 1898:3). As Constantin Floros (1980:81–82) has pointed out, the first strophe fits neatly under the tune (example 2), a congruence suggesting that Brahms may have recycled material from an aborted vocal setting in a manner similar to the circumstances Paul Mies (1919–20) has proposed for

Example 2: Brahms, Piano Sonata No. 1, Finale, mm. 107–25.

Mein Herz ist im Hoch-land, mein Herz ist nicht hier; — mein Herz — ist im Hoch-land, im

Wal - des re - vier; — dort jagt es den Hirsch und ver - fol - get das Reh; — mein

Herz ist im Hoch - land wo - hin ich auch geh! —

the “Edward” Ballade, op. 10, no. 1.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the origins of the melody, Brahms’s admission arguably invited Dietrich to hear the passage—perhaps even the entire movement—in relation to a poem he may have known well from Schumann’s setting (op. 25, no. 13). The same claim can be advanced for the Andante from the Piano Sonata, op. 2, for which Brahms tipped Dietrich off to a hidden poetic source: Count Kraft von Toggenburg’s poem, “Mir ist leide” (Dietrich 1898:3–4).<sup>15</sup> Equally suggestive is Brahms’s remark about the slow movement of the Piano Concerto, op. 15, first brought to light by Robert Haven Schauffler ([1933]1972:438), in which Brahms “had tried to paint a portrait of Clara.” Although the published edition transmits no indication of its programmatic status, Brahms revealed to Clara in correspondence that he conceived of the Adagio from the piano concerto as her portrait in music (December 30, 1856): “I have also painted a soft portrait of you which has become the Adagio” (Litzmann 1927, 1:198).<sup>16</sup>

After 1860, Brahms cultivated what was to become a characteristic reticence on matters pertaining to his own music, but even then the composer found occasion to offer suggestions to his correspondents, now cast in the form of riddles. Most of his remarks on the Piano Quartet, op. 60, for example, seem designed more to puzzle than to illuminate, as when a letter to his close friend, the famous surgeon Theodor Billroth, explained that “the Quartet is rather a strange thing! Something of an illustration of the last chapter of the man in the blue shirt and yellow vest” (October 23, 1874, Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:211).<sup>17</sup> Other instances, though slightly less enigmatic, were nevertheless delivered in a similarly indirect manner. In his correspondence with Billroth, the conductor Otto Dessoff, and the publisher Fritz Simrock, Brahms connected the Violin Sonata, op. 78, with his settings of Klaus Groth’s “Regenlied” and “Nachklang” (op. 59, nos. 3 and 4) by making references to rain and plagiarism in order to ensure that

his correspondents would not only recognize the vocal models, but also link the song texts to the instrumental work. Brahms writes to Billroth in June of 1879: "They're worthless and you still need a soft rainy evening to create the right mood" (Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:283).<sup>18</sup> Brahms emphasizes the same connection in a letter to Dessooff (September 1879): "You must not complain about rain. It has been set to music very well, something I also have attempted in a violin sonata in Spring [op. 78]" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 16:218).<sup>19</sup> A third letter (August 31, 1879) makes no mention of rain, but it hints at the origins of the finale in another work by warning Simrock about the consequences of plagiarism—a jest, of course, for Brahms could not be charged with stealing his own material: "Beware however, that you don't get drawn into legal proceedings regarding copyright!" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 10:128).<sup>20</sup> A similar instance obtains in another letter to Billroth (August 16, 1886) in which Brahms links his settings of Groth's "Komm bald" ("Come Soon," op. 97, no. 5) and Hermann Lingg's "Immer leise wird mein Schlummer" ("My Slumber's Growing Softer," op. 105, no. 2) with his Violin Sonata, op. 100:

Recently, I have occupied myself with a song by [Klaus] Groth which is connected to the A Major Sonata [op. 100]. So I send it now, tied up with another song by Groth—and even one from an old colleague of yours! In any case, you'll be happy about the words, and necessarily apologetic." (Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:398–99)<sup>21</sup>

And of the op. 117 Intermezzi, Brahms alerts Rudolf von der Leyen to an autobiographical component when he refers to the opus as "drei Wiegenlieder meiner Schmerzen" ("Three Lullabies of my Pain," Leyen 1905:82–83).<sup>22</sup> In all these instances, Brahms seems to take pains to give his correspondents indications of special meanings not otherwise accessible to the general listener.

Although we have no direct evidence of Brahms's intentions in such cases, the correspondence with the physiologist Theodor Wilhelm Engelmann regarding op. 60 confirms that Brahms expected his readers to decipher at least the remark in the text about the man in the blue jacket and yellow vest. Brahms wrote,

Gladly, one cannot call it [the work, presumably] nice and the publisher has only missed placing on the title page a picture of the man in the blue shirt and yellow vest (with a pistol at his head). Now it is clear to you how much this scrap of paper concerns me!" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:22)<sup>23</sup>

Engelmann, however, in a letter of November 15, 1875, misinterprets this clue as a reference to *Faust* and his response reflects his puzzlement:

Naturally, we are now very anxious about the new “Pistol” Quartet for all its worth. Unfortunately, you didn’t say if it’s coming soon? Your warnings are of no use! We will know already to look for something delightful within it. Why, however, must the man, whom the publisher forgot on the title page, have a blue shirt and yellow vest? There you will surely have to come to our help. (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:23)<sup>24</sup>

Brahms then instructs Engelmann to read the last chapter of Goethe’s *Werther* if he wants to understand something of the quartet (December 17, 1875): “Your other question, however, told me that you began in the second part of Goethe’s *Faust*—otherwise you should have thought of Werther [necessarily]! Now read to your little wife the last chapter to come to an understanding of the Quartet!” (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:24–5).<sup>25</sup> In a letter responding to Brahms the next day, Engelmann expresses dismay about not having understood the peculiar garments—Werther’s burial clothes—as a reference to the doomed hero himself:

My wife, who at first could not hold back her tears for a few months after first reading the novella, is now so disgraced that you should let her sew a blue shirt and yellow vest for you, fit even for Uncle Bräsig; that would be her apology for not having found the real meaning in your letter. (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:27)<sup>26</sup>

Although Brahms spoke in riddles to his friends, it seems clear that he intended to drop genuine hints and expected his correspondents to decipher and use those clues to make sense of his music. Nowhere is the impact of the received view of Brahms more apparent than in op. 60, however, for, to my knowledge, few scholars have taken his remarks seriously enough to consider the quartet as program music.<sup>27</sup>

## Poetic Mottoes and Other Suggestive Inscriptions

Brahms did not restrict himself to these modes of communication (word of mouth or personal correspondence) in his attempts to affect how his music was received and understood. He occasionally had various cues published to facilitate what he called the “understanding and enjoyment” of his music. Although the autograph of the Piano Sonata, op. 5, does not transmit a poetic motto for the A♭ Major Andante, the composer’s letter of December 26, 1853, instructs his publisher, Bartholf Senff, to add a motto from C. O. Sternau’s “Junge Liebe”: “I have already sealed the ‘Sonata’ and do not wish to think about it any longer; so, I ask that you place the following little verse above the first Andante in small parentheses. It is perhaps necessary for

the ‘understanding and enjoyment’ of the Andante” (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 14:5).<sup>28</sup> The motto reads:

Der Abend dämmt, das Mond- licht scheint, Da sind zwei Herzen in Liebe vereint Und halten sich selig umfassen.	Twilight is falling, the moonlight is shining, there two hearts united in love keep themselves wrapped in bliss.
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The same claim might apply to the interpolated fourth movement, an Intermezzo in B $\flat$  Minor, which carries the subtitle “Rückblick” (“Retrospective”) to clarify its thematic and expressive connection to the earlier movement; indeed, the interpolated movement serves as an expressive double to the Andante.<sup>29</sup> The Andante of the Piano Sonata, op. 1, also transmits not only the suggestive inscription “Nach einem altdeutschen Minneliede,” (“After an old German Minnelied”) but also presents the first strophe of the Minnelied under the main theme.<sup>30</sup> Because such inscriptions indicate that literary works underpin musical ones, Kalbeck suggests that there may have been actual poems behind the op. 10 ballades; only the first ballade, however, specifies such a source, a gruesome tale of patricide: “Nach der schottischen Ballade: ‘Edward’ in Herders ‘Stimmen der Völker”” (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 1:190).<sup>31</sup>

Other examples of inscriptions that are not necessarily programmatic abound but Brahms either never intended these for publication or he added them as post-publication afterthoughts to editions owned only by his friends and colleagues. Several early autographs, for example, carry a signature peculiar to Brahms’s early works: “Johannes Kreisler, Junior.” This signature is, of course, a reference to the hero of E. T. A. Hoffmann’s *Kater Murr*, Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, with whom the young Brahms identified from 1852 to 1860. The 1852 “Rondo after Weber,” the three Piano Sonatas (opp. 1, 2, and 5), the first version of the Piano Trio, op. 8, five of the variations from the op. 9 Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann (nos. 5, 6, 9, 12, and 13), and the Sonatensatz in C Minor (WoO 2) each carry some variant of this name.<sup>32</sup> In addition to insignia for Kreisler, the opp. 2 and 5 Piano Sonatas—as well as five other variations from op. 9 (nos. 4, 7, 8, 14, and 16)—also carry Brahms’s own initial (the letter “B”) at the end of each movement in the autograph (but not the published edition): the op. 2 sonata is marked “B./Kreisler junior,” while all but the third movement of the op. 5 sonata conclude with Brahms’s initial written in the manuscript at the end of each movement. These inclusions resemble Schumann’s well-known dual compositional personae, Florestan and Eusebius. Unlike these alter egos (both of whom Schumann identified in writing and, in *Carnaval*, op. 9, with titles), however, Brahms never mentions his personae in correspondence



and invariably withholds their insignia from publication.<sup>33</sup> Even though we know that his friends Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) and Julius Otto Grimm (1827–1903) addressed him as “Kreisler, Junior,”<sup>34</sup> only those whom Brahms allowed access to the autographs—Hermann Levi, Joachim, and the Schumanns would have seen them—could know which personae were attached to each musical work. Although these signatures are admittedly non-programmatic in nature in that they do not stipulate a direct literary correspondence, they can nevertheless affect reception in that a listener aware of such insignia would have access to Brahms’s “voice”—whether his own or Kreisler’s. As Elaine Sisman has pointed out, the “‘Brahms’ variations are nearly all slow, like the theme, and tend to have a lyrical melody which is sometimes treated in canon, while the ‘Kreislers’ are given quick tempo designations . . . and feature melodic fragments embedded in figuration” (Sisman 1990:146). Although a systematic study of the musical manifestations of Brahms’s compositional personae still needs to be conducted, some scholars have made a promising beginning: the stylistic contrast evidenced in Brahms’s op. 9 has prompted Bozarth to read a conflict between dual compositional voices in the op. 5 Sonata.<sup>35</sup>

Another non-programmatic but equally suggestive case involves the enigmatic “Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!” (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!) which Brahms placed in brackets in the piano staves only in the autograph of the op. 15 Adagio.<sup>36</sup> Although the published edition omits the citation, the inscription has spawned much speculation. Taking a cue from “Mynheer Dominus” (Brahms’s nickname for Schumann), Kalbeck asserts that the text signifies Brahms’s arrival on the musical scene not in the name of the Lord, but in the name of Robert—an admittedly bold claim for the younger composer, but one that Schumann’s followers may very well have understood, given the messianic tone of “Neue Bahnen” (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 1:166). Floros and Bozarth conclude that the quotation refers to Brahms himself but from the point of view of Clara, who saw him as a godsend in her time of need (Floros 1980:146; Bozarth 1990a:211–29). Christopher Reynolds also links the verse to Clara, but, on the basis of analytical findings, argues that Brahms intended it as a reference to Clara coming in the name of Robert (Reynolds 1985:6). Pointing instead to a scene from Hoffmann’s *Kater Murr*, Siegfried Kross takes a completely different approach when he explains the inscription as a further instance of Brahms’s identification with Kreisler, one that “marks Brahms’s passage from the bizarre style of the Kreisler period to the secure knowledge of his own artistry” (Kross 1982:200). That so many plausible yet mutually exclusive explanations can be advanced for this citation might suggest that the significance of the inscription is indecipherable—until it is realized that the viability of each interpretation hinges on which of Brahms’s friends was

reading the inscription. Indeed, Joachim, who owned the manuscript, may very well have interpreted it in the context of Schumann's "Neue Bahnen," while Clara, knowing that the movement was conceived as her portrait, may have seen her own words in the citation. Establishing Brahms's intended meaning proves to be more difficult. However scholars interpret the inscription, it remains a private one, accessible to, and thus decipherable by only those to whom Brahms circulated the autograph—and even then, multiple readings are possible.

A less frequently discussed case occurs in the op. 9 Variations. As is well known, the manuscript of the interpolated tenth variation transmits a cryptic title: "Rose und Heliotrop haben geduftet" (Rose and Heliotrope have bloomed). An image of plants tracking the course of the sun is particularly apt for this variation—an inverted canon between soprano and the "Schumann" theme, now in the bass. But the significance of this title extends beyond contrapuntal virtuosity to include both the other movements of this opus and the compositions to which it is linked. In 1852, Brahms incorporated the "Schumann" theme (originally composed in 1841) into *Bunte Blätter* (op. 99), the first of the "Albumblätter" cycle. Between May 29 and June 3, 1853, Clara composed a set of seven variations on the same theme (op. 20) which she dedicated to Robert and played for Brahms almost a year later, on May 24, 1854. Brahms responded in kind with fourteen of his own variations in June, to which he later inserted two new variations, the present tenth and eleventh, on August 12. The completed set, published in November, was dedicated to Clara.<sup>37</sup> Since it was Clara who inspired Brahms's opus with her own set of variations on the *Bunte Blätter* theme, it is tempting to see in Brahms's tenth variation a musical image of the larger compositional connections: Clara and Brahms, with their individual compositional styles, together compose a set of variations on the same theme as homage to the older composer—her husband, his mentor. In this reading, the enigmatic title would refer to the emergence of the two composers in the light of Schumann's influence. As with the "Benedictus" citation, however, this putative meaning, or others like it, would be accessible only to the Schumanns, who certainly knew of the cryptic title and may even have been in a position to decipher it.

As with his use of suggestive remarks, there is some evidence that Brahms continued the practice of inscribing cues in his editions later in life. The 1877 song, "Unüberwindlich," op. 77, no. 5, specifies the source for borrowed material, in this case music by Domenico Scarlatti, while the E $\flat$  Major Intermezzo of 1892, op. 117, no. 1, carries a poetic motto: a two-line refrain from a Scottish ballad included in Herder's *Stimmen der Völker*, a German translation of "Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament" from Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*:

Schlaf' sanft, mein Kind, schlaf'  
sanft und schön!  
Mich dauert's sehr, dich weinen  
zu seh'n.

Sleep softly my child, sleep softly and  
beautifully!  
It troubles me so to see you cry.<sup>38</sup>

Just as with the op. 5 Andante, Brahms could have supplied this motto to facilitate “enjoyment and understanding” of the Intermezzo.<sup>39</sup> One instance of a comparable private inscription involves the Violin Sonata, op. 78. Although the autograph contains no poetic motto, we know from Kalbeck’s account that Brahms penciled into Heinrich Groeber’s copy of the first edition both an excerpt from the “Verklärung” of Goethe’s *Faust* (act V, scene 7), “Komm, hebe dich zu höhern Sphären! / Wenn er Dich ahnet, folgt er nach” (Come, rise to higher spheres! When he senses you, he will follow) and the incipits from the G Major Violin Sonatas by Mozart (K. 379) and Beethoven (op. 96) (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 3:383–84n1).<sup>40</sup> The inclusion of these references not only stipulates a musical context in which Groeber can experience the sonata (indeed, Brahms may have modelled his own sonata after Beethoven’s),<sup>41</sup> but also points to a literary theme involving the futility of regaining lost youth, the very subject matter of “Regenlied” and “Nachklang,” the head motifs of which the Finale quotes (Parmer 1995:177).<sup>42</sup>

### Secret Programmatic Texts

The third and final mode of private reception involves cases in which Brahms allowed an actual literary text to circulate with his music. It is well known that the young Brahms specified textual sources for many of his early piano works, but it is less widely known that he presented Clara with transcriptions of the texts accompanying the Andantes of the Piano Sonatas, opp. 2 and 5. According to Bozarth, an inventory of the collection of Antonia Speyer-Kufferath and Edward Speyer indicates that two documents containing both sources in Brahms’s own hand existed at one point.<sup>43</sup> The location of these documents is presently unknown, but a letter to Clara (August 21, 1855) contains anonymous transcriptions of both poems, here linked to their respective movements.<sup>44</sup> The evidence not only confirms that Brahms had specific poems in mind for the two movements, but also suggests that he shared these texts in the hope, as he wrote to Senff of the motto, that they would facilitate Clara’s “enjoyment and understanding.”<sup>45</sup> The poem accompanying op. 2 reads as follows:

Mir ist leide.  
das der winter beide.  
walt vn ouch die heide.  
hat gemachet val.

It is painful to me  
that winter  
has made fallow  
both forest and heath;

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sin betwingen.  
lat niht blumen entspringen.  
noch die vogel singen.  
ir vil sussen schal.  
alsus verderbet mich ein selig wib.

du mich lat.  
ane rat.  
den si hat.  
des zergat.  
an froiden gar min lip.

Miner swere.  
schiere ich ane were.  
solde ich die seldebere.  
schowen ane leit.  
du vil here.  
hat schone zuht vn ere.  
der wnsch vn dannoch mere.  
ist gar an si geleit.  
rose wengel mvndel rot si hat.

val hat lang.  
kele blank.  
siten kranc.  
min gedanc.  
an ir vil hohe stat.

Ich wil singen  
mere vf gvt gedingen.  
sol mir wol gelingen.  
das mvs an ir geschehen.  
si kan machen.  
truigherze lachen.  
grosse sorge swachen.  
des mvs man ir ieheh.  
wurde mir ir werder trost geseit.

seht fur war.  
offe bar.  
minu iar.  
wolde ich gar.  
mit froiden sin gemeit.

its firm grip allows  
neither flowers to bloom  
nor birds to sing  
their very sweet songs.  
In like manner, a blessed woman  
destroys me,  
has left me  
without giving the counsel  
of which she is possessed;  
because of this my joy,  
even my life, has perished.

From my sufferings  
I would leave off without hesitation  
if I could see, without feeling pain,  
the one who brings happiness.  
This very noble lady  
is of high breeding and honor;  
any wish, and yet still more,  
is indeed her companion.  
Rosy cheeks and a little red mouth  
has she,  
full long hair,  
a white neck,  
slender waist:  
my thought is  
of her very high station.

I want to sing  
more with good hopes,  
but if I succeed,  
that must happen through her.  
She can make  
sad hearts laugh,  
lessen great worry;  
one must grant her that.  
If her worthy comfort would be  
given me,  
see, verily  
obviously,  
the rest of my life,  
I would indeed consider  
full of joy.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, we have no way of determining Clara's response to the music of op. 2 in light of her reading of this text, but we can still postulate that foreknowledge of the Minnelied might encourage her to hear the tonal, registral, and textural expansion across the Andante as the musical analogue

for the poet's futile attempt to transcend the emotional desolation in which his departed beloved has left him.

Brahms seems to have favored the other modes of private reception late in his life, as cases similar to op. 2 are few in comparison. To date, I have come across only a single instance—one based solely on Kalbeck's sometimes questionable authority.<sup>47</sup> According to the biographer, Brahms supposedly received several anonymous poems as commentary on selected numbers from opp. 118 and 119, which he later distributed amongst friends in private performances of those same works. Kalbeck wrote,

And what joy the anonymous shipment of hand-written poetry (probably from the wife of a Prussian Colonel stationed in Elsaß) would give him, a shipment which brought him an imaginative, rhymed commentary on different pieces in opp. 118 and 119! He asked me what I thought of them, and if this or that poem left me at ease. He [then] directed Dr. Fellingner to copy them, and he distributed to close friends the little booklet decorated with a vignette of music making geniuses printed on clean, hand-made paper. (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 4:304)<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, only one of these poems seems to have survived, that for the *E♭ Minor Intermezzo*, op. 118, no. 6:

Die träge Welle leckt den müden Strand,	The idle waves lick the tired shore,
Und unterm Meeresnebel gähnt der Wind	and under the sea's mist the wind yawns
Verschlafen hin zum blassen Küstensaum.—	sleepily towards the windy coast- line.—
Und regungslos am blassen Küsten- saum,	And motionless on the windy coast- line,
Als hielt' die Schildwach' er am eigenen Grab,	as if he were guarding his own grave,
Ein Sterbender des Daseins Ford' rung löscht.	a dying man extinguishes his claim to existence.
Das Meer des Lebens hat ihn ausgespie'n.	The sea of life has spit him out.
Ihm raunt der Tod ins Ohr: "Du welker Tor,	Death murmurs into his ear: "You withered fool,
Sieh deiner Tage stolz geträumten Traum	see how the proudly dreamt dream of your days
Zerrinnen in der nächt'gen Wellen Schaum!	vanishes in the foam of nocturnal waves!
Er schwindet, nur der Irrtum bleibt zurück."	It dwindles, only error remains."
Der Greis erbebt. Die letzte Träne rinnt,	The old man trembles. He weeps a final tear,

Sein Sterbeseufzer wird zum Hül-  
feschrei:  
"Laß Gott, mein Gott, nicht Wahn  
die Tugend sein!  
Wofür, o Herr, hätt' ich entsagt?  
gekämpft?  
Das Opfer dürft' den Opfernden  
verhöhnen?"  
Jäh stockt das Wort im Morgen-  
rosenglanz,  
Der leuchtend sich der dunklen  
Nacht vermählt;  
Der Himmel flammt, entzückt. Das  
Meer erbebt.  
Von Osten schallt mit schwellender  
Gewalt,  
Hinbrausend ob der Wogen Orgel-  
ton,  
Ein Siegesjubelsang. Posaunend  
wirft  
Der Sturm sein schmetterndes hal-  
lelujah  
In donnernden Akkorden ehern  
Drein:  
"Niemals, o Mensch, war eine Tu-  
gend Wahn,  
Die zur Vollendung Korn für Korn  
gereift,  
Das Laster nur hat sich allein  
gelebt!"  
Der Alte lächelt, nickt und zieht  
hinab  
An Todes Hand ins ew'ge Land des  
Schweigens.  
Die Welle leckt am nächtlichen  
Gestade  
Den müden Strand. Und unterm  
Nebel zieht  
Der Wind verschlafen hin zum  
Küstensaum.—

and his deathly whisper becomes a  
cry for help:

"Oh God, my God, let not virtue be  
a delusion!

Wherefore, oh Lord, would I have  
renounced you?

wrestled you? Must the sacrifice  
deride the giver?"

Suddenly, his words falter in  
morning's red light,  
which marries the dark night;

Heaven is ablaze, enraptured. The  
sea trembles.

From the east resounds with swell-  
ing power,

roaring above the organ sound of  
billowing waves,

a victory song of jubilation. Trum-  
peting,

the storm throws about its "hal-  
lelujah"

in a thundering, brazen accord:

"Never, oh Man, was virtue a delu-  
sion,

which ripened unto the end little  
by little,

only vice alone has lived for itself!"

The old man smiles, nods, and  
moves down, guided

by death's hand into the eternal  
land of silence.

The waves lick the tired shore

at the nocturnal waterside. And  
under the mist

the wind moves sleepily towards the  
coastline.<sup>49</sup>

However much we might cringe at its literary style, this text nevertheless exemplifies a tendency of later nineteenth-century listeners to experience instrumental music through the filter of poetry, and as autobiographical discourse.<sup>50</sup> Given this state of affairs, those who received the poem from Brahms might be encouraged to hear the intermezzo as an account of an old man who contends with a false sense of his worth and value in the face of death, a plausible reading given Brahms's age at this time and his char-

**Example 3a:** *Dies irae*.



**Example 3b:** *Intermezzo*, op. 118, no. 6, mm. 1–4.



acteristic pessimism. Floros further suggests precisely this scenario when he points to the obvious affinity between the main theme, a turning figure on E $\flat$ , and the *Dies irae* of the Requiem (see examples 3a and 3b).<sup>51</sup> Of course, an analysis of the piece informed by this poem would take quite a different route than those traditionally offered.<sup>52</sup>

## Towards Private Program Music

Even though the mature Brahms tended to dispense with programmatic and other verbal adjuncts after 1860 (perhaps because Joachim advised him that such clues had become unfashionable and unnecessary),<sup>53</sup> there nevertheless remain a sufficient number of cases from later years to warrant attention. Of course, scholars could, in keeping with the received view, dismiss these adjuncts as irrelevant to an understanding of Brahms's music and could continue to explain these works without recourse to external sources. But it seems indefensible to insist on categorizing as "absolute" that music for which the composer himself has stipulated extramusical adjuncts, the recent decline of the notion of musical purity notwithstanding. Moreover, even if scholars question Brahms's sincerity about the usefulness of such adjuncts, it is inconceivable that Clara, Dietrich, Billroth, Groeber, and others would have disregarded any clues they received from the composer himself as they tried to understand his music. Indeed, the very aura in which such clues immerse the music may invite listeners to dig for some implied secret content rather than to dismiss such clues as mere compositional crutches unnecessary for understanding and enjoyment. Although we can isolate the moment when Brahms broadcasts his clues and gauge the scope of their impact, nothing survives that points to how his intimates actually received this music. But the very absence of such evidence may indicate that extramusical associations figured as normal components even in the instrumental music of Brahms, and that their suppression in the twentieth century in order to conform to an ideal of musical purity is what should strike us as

exceptional. We should therefore be encouraged to trace the transmission history of pertinent autographs, draw on indirect documentary evidence, and reconstruct interpretations for various types of listeners, whether they were public audiences, musical connoisseurs, the composer's acquaintances, his inner circle of close friends, his loved ones, etc.<sup>54</sup> Scholars who bring to light such associations, then, not only free Brahms's music from the strictures of a narrow, received view, but also restore what may prove to be an integral part of the nineteenth-century experience of Brahms.

If we accept Brahms's adjuncts as viable hermeneutic aids that need to be taken into consideration, are we then dealing with actual specimens of program music? Our answer depends on two issues: first, on how we define this problematic category of "program" music, and second, on how we view the role of scholarship in this aspect of Brahms reception. On the first question, the broadest definitions of program music would not only obscure the circumscribed sphere in which these adjuncts circulated, but would also distort the distinctive way Brahms's music was heard within his circle of intimates. If the category were defined restrictively, i.e., as any instrumental music in which the composer prescribes some external text for listeners to have in mind while listening, then that music for which Brahms provides adjuncts is programmatic only for the privileged few with whom he shared such clues. I find this conclusion more tenable but in adopting it must confront the paradox underlying the second issue. In publicizing the particulars of each case, historians might seem to widen, even annihilate, the narrow sphere in which these textual adjuncts initially circulated. But even as the accumulating evidence (thrust before the public eye by scholars and by others) influences listeners of today to hear a work like op. 60 as program music, we should not forget that this composition, as well as the others under consideration here, belong to an overlooked species of music, what might be called "private program music," and that this genre necessarily implies a double reception history. On the one hand, the general public may still grasp the expressive potential of such music; indeed, those who stand outside of the Brahms circle may even go so far as to supply their own literary narratives. On the other hand, only a select few were truly allowed access to the secret content which the composer himself stipulated. In one sense, then, geography and time bar us from membership in this circle; we can only observe the traces of these private exchanges in the dimly lit corners of Brahms's musical life. But in another sense, scholarship can illuminate some of those corners and allow us to glimpse—behind the received view of Brahms as a composer of absolute music—the shadow of "Brahms the Programmatic."



Notes

1. For one treatment of Brahms's place in late nineteenth-century aesthetics, see Nelson (1996).
2. Robert Schumann's "Neue Bahnen" is reprinted in Schumann (1952:252–54); for discussion, see Floros (1983a). The Manifesto, which appeared in the *Berliner Musik-Zeitung Echo* on May 6, 1860, is reprinted in Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 1:404–5); for discussion, see Floros (1980:74–75). For discussion of Hanslick's reception of Brahms, see Floros (1988). In contrast to the characterization of Brahms as a classicist, Carl Dahlhaus suggests that Brahms's compositional method, that of developing variation, actually distances him from the classical style and aligns him with the proponents of the New German School (Dahlhaus 1980:40–45).
3. The quotation derives from Wiora (1963). For one example of revisionist scholarship, see Floros (1980:71–151). Current definitions of "program music" appear in *The New Harvard Dictionary* (1986), s.vv. "Program music" (by Ralph Locke); and in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), s.vv. "Program music" (by Roger Scruton).
4. For instance, with respect to the poetic Andantes of the piano sonatas, George S. Bozarth writes, "To the degree that these works lack subtlety because of too direct and lasting a reliance upon their poetic models, they must be considered immature . . . The 'program' can inspire the creation of music, and even suggest the emotional progress of the whole composition and many of its details, but ultimately the music must be judged on its own merits" (1990b:378).
5. See, for instance, Niecks ([1906] 1969:446–47).
6. See Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 1:70), and the preface in Hofmann (1971), respectively. For an overview of lost compositions, see Bozarth (1989).
7. "Ich möchte, Sie legten einen Zettel auf meine Briefe, daß sie nächst Ihnen nur und gleich mir gehören, wie ich es immer mit den Ihren machen wollte und auch werde" (Litzmann 1927, 1:187). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
8. "Mir die Briefe zu schicken, solltest Du Dich doch entschließen, und wäre es nur, daß ich sie einmal durchsähe! Ich könnte ja dann manche vernichten und andere noch aufbewahren. Bitte, entschieße Dich. Du mußt doch immer bedenken, daß es eine andere Sache mit Deinen Briefen ist, die, stürbe ich, doch immer in besten, sorgsamsten Händen wären" (Litzmann 1927, 2:300–1).
9. "Bald hätte ich aber vergessen: Es ist viel wichtiger, daß meine Briefe zurückgehen, als die Deinen! Diese kannst Du immer haben—und auch Deine Kinder—an welchen Fall ich nicht glaube. Meine Briefe aber haben keine Rückadresse, wenn ich davon gehe! Deshalb bitte ich also herzlich, sende sie mir, und wenn ich bitte, sende sie bald, so ist das nicht, weil ich Eile habe, sie zum Buchbinder zu bringen!" (Litzmann 1927, 2:315–16).
10. For discussion of this point, see Parmer (1995:81–83) and Hull (1989:237–38).
11. See, for example, Musgrave (1985:131), MacDonald (1990:246), and Frisch (1996:35).
12. The letter itself appears in Litzmann (1927, 1:597).
13. Indeed, her response gives him a good trouncing over for the characteristic rudeness that was to alienate so many of his close friends (Litzmann 1927, 1:597–601).
14. See also Fiske (1968).
15. Kalbeck attempts to confirm Dietrich's assertion by showing that the words from the first stanza fit underneath the notes of the theme ([1912–21] 1976, 1:212).

16. "Auch male ich an einem sanften Porträt von Dir, das dann Adagio werden soll" (Litzmann 1927, 1:198).
17. "Das Quartett wird bloß als Kuriosum mitgeteilt! Etwa eine Illustration zum letzten Kapitel vom Mann im blauen Frack und gelber Weste" (October 23, 1874, Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:211).
18. "Mehr ist sie nicht wert und dazu muß noch eine sanfte Regenabendstunde die nötige Stimmung liefern" (Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:283).
19. "Über Regen mußt du nicht klagen. Er läßt sich sehr gut in Musik setzen, was ich auch den Frühling in einer Violin-Sonata [op. 78] versucht habe" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 16:218).
20. "Hüten Sie sich aber, sie kann Ihnen einen Nachdrucksprozeß zuziehen!" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 10:128). For discussion, see Parmer (1995:161–77).
21. "Aber ich genierte mich neulich, ein Lied von Groth beizulegen, das mit der A-dur-Sonate zusammenhängt. Da ich es nun doch sende, so drängt sich ein anderes von Groth dazu—and da noch eins von einem alten Kollegen [Hermann Lingg] von Dir! An den Worten wirst du jedenfalls Freude haben und nötigenfalls entschuldigen" (Gottlieb-Billroth 1935:398–99). For these and other possible references, see also Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 4:16–22).
22. Brahms frequently channeled personal grief in his compositions. *Nänie*, for example, was written for his friend the painter, Anselm Feuerbach, who died in 1880, while the Piano Concerto, op. 83, was dedicated to his teacher, Eduard Marxsen, who died in 1887. It is possible that the lullabies could have been composed in response to the deaths in 1892 of his long-time admirer, Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, and his sister, Elise.
23. "Lieblich kann man es nicht nennen [und] der Verleger hat nur versäumt den Mann mit blauem Frack [und] gelber Weste (mit der Pistole vor dem Kopf) auf dem Titelblatt zeichnen zu lassen. Nun wird's Ihnen mit dem Zettel wie mir inliegendem gehen!" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:22).
24. "Jetzt sind wir natürlich auf das neue Pistolenquartett aufs Äußerste gespannt. Leider schrieben Sie nicht ob es bald kommt? Ihre Warnungen werden nichts fruchten! Wir werden das Liebliche darin schon zu finden wissen. Warum muß aber der Mann, den der Verleger auf dem Titelblatte vergessen hat, einen blauen Frack [und] eine gelbe Weste haben? Da werden Sie uns schon zu Hilfe kommen müssen" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:23).
25. "Ihre andere Frage aber sagt mir daß Sie in Goethe von *Faust* II anfangen—sonst hätten Sie [notwendig] an Werther denken müssen! Nun lesen Sie Ihrer kleinen Frau die letzten Capitel damit Verständniß für das [Quartett] komme!" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:24–5).
26. "Meine Frau, die erst vor wenigen Monaten beim ersten Lesen des Romans ihre [Tränen] nicht bemeistern konnte, ist nun so schnöde Ihnen säen zu lassen, blauer Frack und gelbe Weste paßten ja auch auf Onkel Bräsig, und das wäre ihre Entschuldigung daß sie den wahren Sinn Ihrer Zeilen nicht gefunden" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 13:27).
27. Kalbeck, however, was sufficiently convinced by the obvious biographical parallels between Werther and the young Brahms: "Ein musikalisches Denkmal hat Brahms seiner Wertherzeit, als welche man seinen Düsseldorfer Aufenthalt von 1854–56 bezeichnen kann, im Allegro des c-moll-Quartetts op. 60 gesetzt" (Brahms set, in the Allegro of his C Minor Quartet, op. 60, a musical monument to his "Werther-period," which one can call his stay in Düsseldorf from 1854–56, Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 1:231.) See also Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 3:10–11, 58). One provisional attempt to view the work in relation to Werther appears in Mahrt (1992:102–11). For an extended discussion, see Smith (2005).

28. "Ich habe die 'Sonate' schon zugesiegelt und mag mich nicht mehr aufhalten; so bitte ich Sie folgenden kleinen Vers über das erste Andante in Paranthese klein setzen zu lassen. Es ist zum Verständnis des Andante vielleicht nötig oder angenehm" (*Brahms Briefwechsel*, 14:5). For discussion of the movement in relation to the motto, see Kraus (1986); also in English translation by Lillian Lim as Kraus (1988).

29. This "Rückblick" Andante may even have its own hidden textual adjunct, a companion piece by Sternau entitled "Bitte," found with "Junge Liebe" in Brahms's apartment after his death. See Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 1:121) and Bozarth (1983a:110).

30. For music-text analyses, see Bozarth (1990b:348–52) and Parmer (1995:177–81).

31. The text can be found in Fischer-Dieskau (1977:197–98). Brahms probably came to know this poem through his acquaintance with Julius Allgeyer, a student of copper-plate engraving. Although no evidence links Allgeyer with op. 10 directly, he is the dedicatee for the op. 75 duets of which the first is a setting of the "Edward" ballade. See May (1905, 1:173). For my music-text analysis of this piece, see Parmer (1997:379–87).

32. See the appropriate opus numbers in McCorkle (1984). The manuscript of the op. 6 songs also contains a Kreisler signature (but in another hand). Three further instances of the Kreisler signature appear in Brahms's copy of the first edition of Schumann's *Genoveva* (see *19th-Century Music* 1982:182–83), in Brahms's copy of the *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (Hofmann 1974:item 327), and in the humorous bylaws he drew up for the Hamburg Women's Choir in 1860 (Bozarth 1983a:115). For discussion of Brahms in relation to this character, see Floros (1980:84–98) and Kross (1982).

33. For one discussion of op. 9, see Sisman (1990:145–49).

34. Joachim used the name only once, in the letter of April 1854. See *Brahms Briefwechsel*, 5:36. Grimm used the name more often, in correspondence with Brahms (see the letters written between December 21, 1853, and October 1854, *Brahms Briefwechsel*, 4:1, 2, 4) and with Joachim (see the letters of March 9, July, and November 10, 1854, *Brahms Briefwechsel*, 5:27, 36, 48, and 71).

35. See Bozarth (1990b:368–77).

36. A facsimile of this page appears in Floros (1980:147).

37. The interplay between Brahms and Clara is also evidenced in the inclusion of a reference to her op. 3 in the published edition of her op. 20 variations—a citation which does not appear in either of the two manuscript versions of the opus. Clara must have added it after seeing Brahms's reference to her own op. 3 in his tenth variation. See Reich (1985:246).

38. According to Kalbeck, the third intermezzo, in C# Minor, may also be bound up with another text from Herder's anthology. This poem, known as "Wehgeschrei der Liebe" or "Herzweh," follows "Schlaf" sanft, mein Kind" in Brahms's personal collection and can be read as a companion piece. See Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 4:280) and Bozarth (1983a:111). The texts can be found in Herder (1968, 25:164–66, 202–4).

39. For a music-text analysis of this opus, see Parmer (1997:367–79).

40. The inscription is also discussed in Fellingner (1983:53).

41. See Parmer (1995:177n46).

42. A less widely known example occurs in the E Major Intermezzo, op. 116, no. 4. The upper left corner of the autograph transmits the inscription "ursprünglich Notturmo," an inclusion suggesting that Brahms initially conceived this piece as a nocturne before giving it a more generic title for incorporation into a collection of fantasies. But the inscription is in another

hand and so it remains to be seen if the inscription actually issued from Brahms himself. See McCorkle (1985) under the appropriate opus number and also Floros (1983b, 5:50).

43. Brahms clearly indicates that a Minnelied is to accompany the second sonata, although he does not specify which of its four movements. See Bozarth (1983a:111).

44. Bozarth speculates that the first document was the one enclosed in the letter to Clara, but when separated was replaced by the document in the unknown hand (1990b:353n20). The letter itself makes no reference to these enclosures. See Litzmann (1927, 1:133–34).

45. Brahms may even have had Dietrich's response in mind as well, for Dietrich could identify the source for the op. 2 Andante by name. Detailed music-text analyses for both movements can be found in Bozarth (1990b).

46. The poem is taken from Pfaff (1909:cols. 36–37), as transcribed in Bozarth (1990b:355).

47. In regard to Kalbeck's authority, see Musgrave (1988).

48. "Und welche Freude bereite ihm die anonyme Sendung von Poetenhand (der Frau eines preußischen, im Elsaß stationierten Obersten), die ihm einen phantasievollen, gereimten Kommentar zu verschiedenen Stücken aus op. 118 und 119 brachte! Er fragte mich, was ich davon hielte, und da auch mir eines und das andere Gedicht sehr wohl gefiel, beauftragte er Dr. Fellingner, sie vervielfältigen zu lassen, und verteilte das sauber auf Büttenpapier abgezogene, mit einer Vignette von musizierenden Genien geschmückte Heftchen an nähere Freunde" (Kalbeck [1912–21] 1976, 4:304).

49. The text is transcribed in Kalbeck ([1912–21] 1976, 4:552). The translation is my own. In a personal communication, David Brodbeck suggested that I investigate the possibility of Kalbeck's authorship for this poem. I have not as yet come to a firm conclusion on this point.

50. For discussion of this phenomenon as indication of a decline in musical literacy, see Botstein (1992:143–45).

51. See Floros (1983b:54–55).

52. For a non-programmatic reading, see Scott (1995:188–90).

53. In June 1854, Brahms was thinking of publishing a two-volume set of piano pieces under the title, "Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines Musikers. Herausgegeben vom jungen Kreisler." The present op. 9 variations may be the second volume of this set. See *Brahms Briefwechsel*, 5:48–51.

54. For discussion of the transmission of Brahms's extant manuscripts, see Bozarth (1983b).

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